

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Alabama Department of Public Safety

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### Alabama State Troopers Arrest Three in Driver License Fraud Case

**BIRMINGHAM** — Driver license fraud investigators of the Alabama Department of Public Safety have arrested a Jefferson County Revenue Department employee and two Birmingham men in connection with a scheme involving fraudulent Alabama driver licenses.

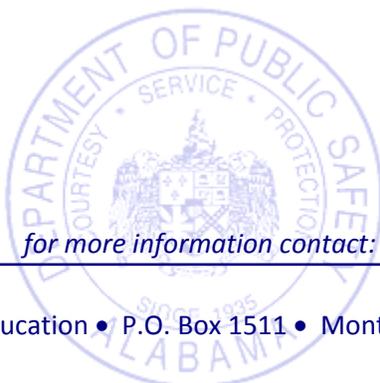
State trooper investigators arrested Aquelia Star Curi Cheatam, 33, of Pleasant Grove, on one charge of second-degree forgery. Troopers arrested Cheatam without incident about 10 a.m. Friday at her job with the Birmingham Revenue Office and transported her to the Jefferson County Jail.

Troopers also arrested Issac Earl Smith II, 36, on three charges of second-degree forgery, and Byron Lon Trelle Hope, 29, on one charge of second-degree forgery. Both men are from Birmingham. The forgery charge, a Class C felony, carries a sentence of up to five years in prison.

According to Col. J. Christopher Murphy, director of the Department of Public Safety, Cheatam issued fraudulent driver licenses to Smith and Hope, who were acquaintances of hers. He praised the work of investigators in making the arrests to protect the state licensing system and guard against fraud. "A driver license is extremely valuable, and when we protect the integrity of the licensing system, we in turn protect banking and retail industries, as well as our homeland security," said Murphy.

The ongoing state and federal investigation was initiated through information provided by the U.S. Secret Service.

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